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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 001629

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON AND FOREIGN MINISTER
SEYOUM DISCUSS REGIONAL ISSUES

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1589

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) During a July 7 meeting, Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson and Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin discussed latest developments in Somalia and shared concerns about Sudan. In addition to re-iterating that Ethiopia had no intentions to re-intervene in Somalia, Minister Seyoum urged U.S. support for sanctions on Eritrea in the July 9 UN Security Council debate on Somalia (reftel).

SOMALIA

12. (C) At the outset of the meeting, FM Seyoum noted that he had just issued invitations to the IGAD Foreign Ministers for a July 10 meeting in Addis to discuss follow-up to the decisions on Somalia taken by the African Union (AU) at its recently concluded Summit. Most particularly, said Seyoum, the ministers would discuss the issue of changes to the rules of engagement (sic) for AMISOM that would permit neighboring countries to participate in AMISOM or a stabilization force. He assured A/S Carson that Ethiopia had no intention of re-entering Somalia. Ethiopia could be more helpful by training TFG security forces as it had done in the past and could do this in the shortest and most cost effective manner.

In addition, Seyoum asked for U.S. activism to encourage Uganda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana to deliver on their promises to send additional forces to AMISOM. According to Seyoum, Ethiopia was prepared to use its forces to help extract AMISOM should that become necessary and was planning on a contingency basis. But, he noted that an extraction could only happen in cooperation and coordination with the U.S.

13. (C) A/S Carson assured Seyoum that the U.S. continued to encourage the Algerians to lift the third Burundian battalion into Mogadishu. During the AU Summit in Sirte, he had pursued several angles to persuade the Algerians, including through the Arab League. UN Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Lynn Pascoe, was going to speak with the Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans to push them for troops, but they were concerned about the AMISOM mandate and might require changes in order to commit forces. A/S Carson also said that he had also raised the issue of troop contributions with the Kenyan foreign minister a few days before, but that the Kenyans were reluctant although they may reconsider if the situation continues to deteriorate. He had tried to help the Kenyans understand how they are impacted by the continuing instability in Somalia) large Somali refugee populations in Dadaab and Eastleigh, and exponential growth in smuggling of

illicit goods which circumvent customs authorities. A/S Carson said he was hopeful that the Kenyans would reconsider how they can best engage on Somalia. FM Seyoum noted that Somalia was a direct threat to the security of Kenya and Ethiopia, collective action and U.S. leadership was critical.

ERITREA

14. (C) Seyoum raised the negative role of Eritrea in Somalia and urged the U.S. to support the IGAD and AU position regarding sanctions in the July 9 UNSC Somalia discussions. He also cited the Europeans, especially the Netherlands and Denmark, as being unhelpful in constraining Eritrea because they continued to provide assistance despite Isaias's bad behavior. FM Seyoum raised a June 29 letter from Louis Michel to Isaias as particularly troubling (no details provided) and expressed Ethiopia's frustration to see how a spoiler is rewarded. The FM said Eritrea is now threatening Ethiopia's access to the Djibouti port; &there must be consequences8 said Seyoum, &we cannot allow Isaias to expand the crisis even further.8 A/S Carson told the Foreign Minister that he had spoken with the Europeans on the margins of the AU Summit and would be traveling to Stockholm for meeting in a few days. The Assistant Secretary said he intended to ask the Europeans why they were so out of sync with the AU and IGAD.

SUDAN

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15. (C) FM Seyoum highlighted Ethiopian concerns about Sudan, both the prospects for the CPA as well as Darfur, especially the Sudan/Chad border. A/S Carson outlined briefly the efforts of Special Envoy (SE) Gration to reach agreement between President Deby and President Bashir on cantonment of the rebels on each side of the border. While still just on paper, this agreement held promise as a possible way forward. He encouraged Seyoum to stay in touch with SE as discussions progressed. On the North-South conflict, Seyoum said factionalism is the greatest danger in the South. If the Southerners do not overcome their in-fighting, the cause is lost, said Seyoum, and we in Ethiopia are gravely threatened by instability in Sudan. Ethiopia wants to work with the U.S. to try to move CPA implementation forward.

YAMAMOTO